

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

INFO RUMJBT/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA 3222

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

HICOMTERPACIS SAIPAN

AMEMBASSY SUVA BY POUCH

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SAIPAN PASS STATUS LNO TRENT

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM CANBERRA DATED MAY 30, 1974 SENT
ACTION SECSTATE WASHDC INFO WELLINGTON, DEPT O F INTERIOR DOTA
WASHDC IS REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PDEV, EAID, PP, AS

SUBJECT: PAPUA NEW GUINEA: RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

REF: STATE 082459

1. FOLLOWING ARE THE HIGHLIGHTS OF AN AIRGRAM ON THE ABOVE
SUBJECT WHICH WILL BE POUCHED FROM CANBERRA ON JUNE 4. THIS
TELEGRAM IS BEING SENT IN ADVANCE FOR POSSIBLE BACKGROUND USE
FOR THE FORTHCOMING MEETING OF THE TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL.
EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS, HOWEVER, THAT PAPUA NEW GUINEA ITEM IN
THIS TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL MEETING IS LIKELY TO BE POSTPONED
UNTIL SEPTEMBER.

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2. FORTHCOMING MEETING OF PNG HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 24 HAS PORTENTS OF BEING MOST IMPORTANT SESSION SINCE COALITION GOVERNMENT FORMED IN APRIL , 1972. THIS IS BECAUSE MANY OF CONTENTIOUS ISSUES HAVE BEEN PUT ASIDE WITH EXPECTATION THEY COULD BE SETTLED IN DUE COURSE. WITH CHIEF MINISTER SOMARE'S AVOWED DESIRE TO BRING PAPUA NEW GUINEA INTO INDEPENDENCE BY DECEMBER 1, 1974, HOWEVER, SEVERAL SUBSTANTIVE AND IMPORTANT MATTERS WILL HAVE TO BE DEALT WITH BY THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY IN NEXT FEW MONTHS.

3. HOUSE MEETING IN JUNE IS EXPECTED TO DEAL WITH (A) DATE OF INDEPENDENCE, (B) REPORT OF CONSTITUTIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE, AND (C) NEW DRAFT LAND LEGISLATION. ALL OF THESE MATTERS ARE EXTREMELY CONTENTIOUS ISSUES WITHIN PNG BODY POLITIC.

4. INDEPENDENCE DATE: ALTHOUGH SOMARE SAID IN APRIL WHEN DEBATE ON THIS ITME WAS POSTPONED UNTIL JUNE MEETING OF HOUSE THAT HE HAD "THE NUMBERS" IN HOUSE TO ASSURE ACCEPTANCE OF DEC 1 DATE, HIS RECENT TRIPS TO SEVERAL DISTRICTS IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA MAY HAVE WEAKENED HIS RESOLVE. THERE CONTINUES TO BE OPEN QUESTION OF HOW PAPUAN MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE WILL VOTE ON EARLY INDEPENDENCE IN LIGHT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL INROADS MADE BY PAPUA BESENA MOVEMENT ON THIS SUBJECT IN RECENT MONTHS. ACCORDING TO LOCAL SOURCE IN PORT MORESBY, SUCH STALWARTS AS MINISTER FOR COMMERCE OLEWALE ARE SERIOUSLY CONCERNED WITH THIS ISSUE IN THEIR OWN ELECTORATES. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT A POLITICAL COMPROMISE WILL BE REACHED TO DELAY DATE FOR INDEPENDENCE BY SEVERAL MONTHS. MOST FREQUENT DATES MENTIONED FOR PROCLAMATION OF INDEPENDENCE NOW ARE MAY-JUNE 1975.

5. CONSTITUTIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE: THIS COMMITTEE HEADED BY FATHER JOHN MOMIS OF BUKA AND JOHN KAPUTIN FROM RABUL HAS SUCCEEDED IN HEATING UP POLITICAL CLIMATE IN PNG TO A CONSIDERABLE DEGREE BECAUSE OF HIGHLY CONTENTIOUS AND RACIALLY-MOTIVATED RECOMMENDATIONS ON CITIZENSHIP . LEAKS TO PRESS INDICATE THAT EXPATRIATES CAN EXPECT SIX-EIGHT YEARS WAIT BEFORE QUALIFYING FOR PNG LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CITIZENSHIP AFTER INDEPENDENCE, AND PERSONS OF MIXED RACE MAY HAVE TO WAIT JUST AS LONG. ACCORDING TO REPORTS CPC IS RECOMMENDING STRINGENT APPLICATION OF CITIZENSHIP LAWS WHICH WOULD DISQUALIFY TWO CURRENT MINISTERS, JULIUS CHAN AND BRUCE JEPHCOTT FROM RUNNING FOR OFFICE AND INDEED FROM HOLDING ANY MINISTERIAL PORTFOLIO IN GOVERNMENT ELECTED AFTER INDEPENDENCE. BOTH MINISTERS AND CHIEF MINISTER HAVE PUBLICLY DECLARED THEIR OPPOSITION

TO THE PROPOSALS AS HAS LEADER OF UNITED PARTY, TEI ABAL. IT WOULD APPEAR AT THIS TIME THAT THESE PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE HOUSE AND THAT A MORE MODERATE APPROACH TO THE QUESTION OF CITIZENSHIP WILL BE MADE.

6. LAD LEGISLATION: NEW DRAFT LEGISLATION ON LAND ACQUISITION BY PNG GOVERNMENT SCHEDULED ALSO TO BE INTRODUCED INTO THE HOUSE IN JUNE. SUCH LEGISLATION IS OF VITAL CONCERN TO NUMBER OF EXPATRIATES ALTHOUGH SOME COPIES OF DRAFT LEGISLATION HAVE BEEN MADE AVAILABLE TO INTERESTED PARTIES, DISCUSSION OF THE SUBJECT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN CONFINED TO PRIVATE MEETINGS BETWEEN GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES AND REPRESENTATIVES OF LAND HOLDERS. WHETHER NEXT HOUSE SESSION WILL BE ABLE TO DEAL IN ANY COHERENT WAY WITH COMPLEX LAND LEGISLATION IS DUBIOUS AT THIS POINT. LOCAL INFORMANTS STATE THAT A CONSIDERED DISCUSSION IS BELIEVED UNLIKELY BECAUSE OF PRESS OF OTHER BUSINESS.

7. IN SUM, POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN PNG ARE IN STATE OF FLUX AT LEAST UNTIL MEETING OF HOUSE AT END OF JUNE. PNG WATCHERS STILL CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT SOMARE GOVERNMENT WILL PURSUE A MODERATE AND REASONABLE POLICY BOTH INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY.
GREEN UNQUOTE KISSINGER

NOTE BY OC/T: POUCHED SUVA.

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